

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-08 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6475

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CARIO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 9746

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT SCUL MX IS

SUBJECT: INTERFAITH PEACE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CONFERENCE

REF A. RABAT 4064, B. TEL AVIV 5189

1. ISRAELI AMB AYNOR HAD ALREADY WARNED ME OF ECHEVERRIA'S ENTHUSIASM FOR A POSSIBLE WORLD CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, WHICH HE BELIEVED HAD BEEN STIMULATED BY RABBI HERSHBERG. IN AMB AYNOR'S OPINION, THIS IS ONE OF ECHEVERRIA'S PASSING FANCIES AND MAY NOT TAKE PLACE, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE EARLY DATE ENVISAGED FOR IT AND
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THE ABSOLUTE LACK OF PREPARATION.

2. AS REGARDS RABBI HERSHBERG, AMY AYNOR CONFIRMED OUR IMPRESSION THAT HE IS A WELL-INTENTIONED "ONE-MAN-SHOW". HE IS IN NO WAY THE GRAND RABBI OF MEXICO AND THE SO-CALLED "UNION OF LATIN AMERICAN RABBIS" IS EQUALLY ILLUSORY. IN FACT, HE IS A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND NOT NECESSARILY HIGHLY RESPECTED. A YEAR AGO WHEN HE WISHED TO PRESENT AN AWARD AND SCROLL TO PRESIDENT FORD, THE ADVICE OF JEWISH LEADERS, BOTH HERE AND, IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, IN THE UNITED STATES, WAS TO AVOID BECOMING IDENTIFIED WITH THIS WELL-INTENTIONED BUT SELF-PROMOTING OLD GENTLEMAN.

3. INCIDENTALLY, ALTHOUGH IT IS ECHEVERRIA'S DEAREST WISH THAT POPE PAUL VISIT MEXICO TO INAUGURATE THE NEW BASILICA OF GUADALUPE (PRESENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION WITH GOM FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION), IT HAS RECENTLY BEEN ANNOUNCED FROM THE VATICAN THAT THE POPE'S HEALTH WILL NOT PERMIT HIM TO COME HERE.

4. DESPITE THESE CAVEATS, WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT AS ECHEVERRIA'S TENACTIY IS GREAT AND HIS ACCESS TO FINANCIAL RESOURCES ALMOST UNLIMITED, THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON PEACE AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM MAY WELL TAKE PLACE HERE. IN FACT, ECHEVERRIA MAY SURPRISE US AND EVEN PRODUCE THE POPE AFTER ALL.
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